

State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist  
Governor

George H. Shelton  
Secretary

# Office of Inspector General

*Enhancing Public Trust in Government*

**REDACTED**

**OIG Investigation**

~010-0045

**Dawn E. Case**  
**Inspector General**

**Keith R. Parks**  
**Chief of Investigations**

**"Provide leadership in the promotion of  
accountability and integrity of State Government."**

**Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families and  
Advance Personal and Family Recovery**

# DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Investigative Report

Case Number: 201000045

George H. Sheldon  
Secretary

Dawn E. Case  
Inspector General

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Children and Families (Department) contracts with Community-Based Care provider (CBC) United for Families, Inc. (UFF) through contract #ZUK684 (effective July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2014). Pursuant to the contract, UFF provides foster care and related services in Martin County (Circuit 19). To help provide those services, UFF subcontracts (no contract number; formerly effective July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010, and currently effective July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011) with Children's Home Society of Florida (CHS).

CHS Dependency Program Director Susan Murphy reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) that former<sup>1</sup> CHS Dependency Case Manager<sup>2</sup> Jorge Vazquez was suspected of falsifying a monthly Teen Normalcy Plan<sup>3</sup> (TNP) regarding 17-year-old [REDACTED] (Child 1) and Doris Brawn (the Foster Mother), in reference to Florida Safe Families Network<sup>4</sup> (FSFN) Intake #2008428443. Ms. Murphy related that UFF Quality Management Specialist Alisa Carter advised her (Ms. Murphy) that a UFF audit of TNPs indicated that Mr. Vazquez may have copied and pasted the signature portion of the Teen Normalcy Plan dated November 11, 2009, from a previous Teen Normalcy Plan dated February 24, [REDACTED].

Based on the information provided by Ms. Murphy, the OIG subsequently initiated an investigation on May 3, ~ ~ ~

Children's Home Society Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez falsified a foster care document in reference to FSFN Intake #2008428443. If supported, the [REDACTED] of Attachment I, B. 1. a. (7), Contract #2 [REDACTED] Department and United for Families, Inc.; and Attachment I, B. [REDACTED] contract between United for Families, Inc. and Children's Home Society of Florida. Further, the matter was referred to law enforcement to [REDACTED].

<sup>1</sup> Effective February 3, 2010, Mr. Vazquez was no longer employed with CHS.

<sup>2</sup> Dependency Case Managers are responsible to identify and assess client and family needs concerning minors placed in foster care by the Department due to abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or exploitation by caretakers.

<sup>3</sup> CHS document used to determine age appropriate activities and responsibilities for children in foster care, ages 13 through 18. This document is updated every 90 days at permanent staffings or during home visits maintained in physical form.

<sup>4</sup> Florida's federally funded Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System that provides information to support multiple community based organizations and Sheriff's offices, in partnership with the State of Florida, to identify victims of abuse and neglect.

determine if the following statutes have been violated: §839.13 (2)(a) and (c), F.S., and §838.022 (1)(a) and (3), F.S.

## Findings

The information obtained **supports** the allegation.

### OIG Review of Documentation Concerning Child 1

Teen



- The signature page dated [redacted] reflects three dated signatures; Child 1's, the Foster Mother's and the dependency case manager's and the dependency supervisor's signature is not reflected. Only the individuals indicated that the signatures reflected appear to be theirs.

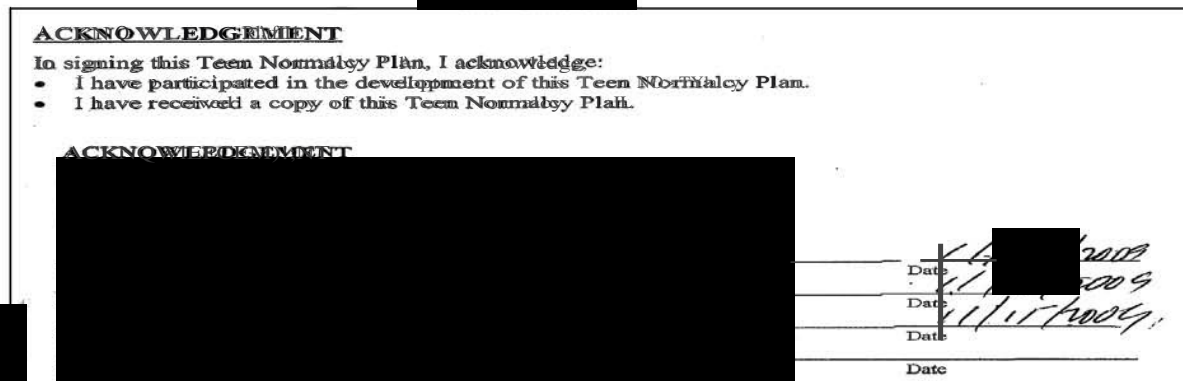
### Teen Normalcy Plan dated [redacted] 2009

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In signing this Teen Normalcy Plan, I acknowledge:

- I have participated in the development of this Teen Normalcy Plan.
- I have received a copy of this Teen Normalcy Plan.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**



Date: [redacted] 2009  
Date: [redacted] 2009  
Date: [redacted] 2009  
Date: [redacted]

- The signature page dated November 11, 2009 reflects three dated signatures; Child 1's, the Foster Mother's and the dependency case manager's. The dependency case manager's supervisor's signature is not reflected. All individuals indicated that the signatures reflected appear to be theirs. However, the dates reflected appear to be handwritten in ink, while the signatures are not handwritten in ink but appear to have either been copied and pasted or cut and copied onto the form from a previous form, as they appear to be exact photocopy replicas of the signatures contained on the Teen Normalcy Plan dated February 24, 2009.



- Two "Acknowledgement" sections are reflected on the signature page of the TNP dated November 11, 2009, while only one is reflected on the TNP dated February 24, 2009. According to Ms. Murphy, the actual form has only one "Acknowledgement" section, indicating that the TNP dated November 11, 2009 has been altered. Additionally, the "Acknowledgement" section which appears to have been duplicated is located below what appears to be the original "Acknowledgement" section and is offset to the right.

#### FSFN Intake #2008-428443

A review by the OIG of FSFN Intake #2008-428443 revealed no documentation of visits or staffings by Mr. Vazquez for November 11, 2009 (the date reflected on the TNP that appears to have been altered).

#### Testimony of CHS Dependency Program Director [REDACTED] Murphy

Ms. Murphy verified the information contained in the Introduction section and further explained that regarding the TNP dated February 24, 2009, only the signature of the dependency case manager supervisor was written in blue ink, while all other signatures appeared in black ink. Ms. Murphy added that CHS has now implemented the policy of using only blue ink, in an effort to prevent a similar incident from occurring in the future. Ms. Murphy further added that Dependency Case Manager Supervisor Wendy Crouch advised her that the signature reflected on the TNP dated February 24, 2009 is hers (Ms. Crouch's).

#### Testimony of CHS Dependency Case Manager Supervisor Wendy Crouch

Ms. Crouch affirmed that the signature reflected on the TNP dated February 24, 2009 was signed by her and appears to be the only signature written in blue ink. Ms. Crouch stated that she transferred to CHS in Okeechobee during September 2009 (exact date unknown); at which time her supervision of Mr. Vazquez ceased. Ms. Crouch explained that TNPs are updated at permanent staffings and on home visits conducted by case managers, to reflect new activities and responsibilities recommended for the child.

#### Testimony of the Foster Mother

The Foster Mother stated that Child 1 has resided in her home for over one and one-half years. She recalled that Mr. Vazquez made several home visits regarding Child 1 and that he (Mr. Vazquez) was very helpful with resources for the foster home. The Foster Mother stated that she regularly signed Child 1's TNP upon Mr. Vazquez' visits (exact dates unknown) and that the signatures on the TNPs for February 24, 2009 and November 11, 2009, appeared to be hers. The Foster Mother was unable to recall if Mr. Vazquez conducted home visits on the aforementioned dates.

#### Testimony of Child 1

Child 1 stated that he recalled meeting with Mr. Vazquez; however, he could not recall specific dates or when the last visit with him (Mr. Vazquez) occurred. Child 1 added that the signatures on the TNPs for February 24, 2009 and November 11, 2009 appeared to be his.



### Testimony of CHS Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez

Mr. Vazquez stated that during his employment with CHS, Child 1 was a child on his caseload. Mr. Vazquez explained that he recognized both TNPs; dated February 24, 2009 and November 11, 2009. Mr. Vazquez stated that on February 24, 2009, he conducted a face-to-face visit with Child 1; obtaining signatures from both Child 1 and Mother 1 on the TNP. Regarding the TNP dated November 11, 2009, Mr. Vazquez asserted that the document appeared to be a facsimile; however, he further asserted that Mother 1's and Child 1's signatures were in fact signed by them. Mr. Vazquez explained that CHS requires case managers to obtain signatures on TNPs upon face-to-face contact with the child and the caregiver; however, he could not recall why he had not obtained the original signatures upon a face-to-face contact during the November 2009 visit. Mr. Vazquez suggested that perhaps he faxed the November 11, 2009 TNP to the Foster Mother for her and Child 1's signatures.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Vazquez verified his signature and that the dates on both TNPs were written by him. Mr. Vazquez could not account for the duplication of the "Acknowledgement" section on the TNP dated November 11, 2009.

### Employee Time Records

A review of CHS Salary Timesheets for Mr. Vazquez for the months of February 2009, November 2009 and January 2010 revealed that Mr. Vazquez recorded hours worked during the dates documented on the Teen Normalcy Plans.

## ADDITIONAL ALLEGATION AND FINDINGS

During the course of this investigation, the following Additional Allegation was developed:

### Additional Allegation

**Children's Home Society Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez failed to report suspected child abuse to the Florida Abuse Hotline within the statutorily mandated timeframe. If supported, the allegation would constitute a violation of Attachment I, B. 1. a. (7), Contract #22JK84 between the Department and United for Families, Inc. and Attachment II, 21, the contract between United for Families, Inc. and Children's Home Society of Florida. Further, the matter was referred to law enforcement to determine if the following statute has been violated: §39.201(1)(a) and (b)5 (2)(a) F.S.**

<sup>5</sup> As previously noted, the Foster Mother did not recall ever faxing any documents to Mr. Vazquez.

<sup>6</sup> The city of residence for the Foster Mother in reference to FSFN Intake #428443, is Port Saint Lucie.



## Findings

The information obtained **supports** the allegation.

### Testimony of CHS Dependency Program Director Susan Murphy

Ms. Murphy advised that the Florida Abuse Hotline<sup>7</sup> (Hotline) initiated the institutional intake #2010-013085 at 9:02 p.m. on January 24, 2010, concerning allegations of physical injury perpetrated by household members against nine-year-old [REDACTED] (Child 2). Ms. Murphy reported that CHS received a copy of FSFN Intake #2010-013085 on January 26, 2010, at which time Mr. Vazquez was notified due to Child 2 being on his (Mr. Vazquez's) case load. Ms. Murphy explained that Mr. Vazquez confirmed to her (Ms. Murphy) that during a visitation with Child 2 on January 22, 2010, she (Child 2) disclosed to him (Mr. Vazquez) that household members in the foster home were allegedly abusing her. Ms. Murphy noted that according to hotline information, Mr. Vazquez did not report the allegation until two days after Child 2 made the disclosure, and he (Mr. Vazquez) identified himself to the Hotline as "Jorge Vazquez," the "Neighbor/Friend." Ms. Murphy further noted that Mr. Vazquez is required by Florida Statute to provide his full name to the Hotline as well as report allegations of abuse and/or neglect immediately.

### Testimony of Circuit 19 Child Protective Investigator Lisa Wells

Ms. Wells stated that FSFN Institutional Intake #2010-013085, regarding Child 2, was assigned to her on January 24, 2010. Ms. Wells explained that upon speaking with Mr. Vazquez on January 25, 2010, he advised her (Ms. Wells) that Child 2 had disclosed to him (exact date unknown) that physical abuse (Ms. Wells did not elaborate) was occurring in the foster home.

### Testimony of Child [REDACTED]

Child 2 stated that she is eight years old and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Child 2 further stated that Mr. Vazquez was her previous "case worker and a very nice man." She added that she does not recall the last time she spoke with Mr. Vazquez, but she does recall visits with him while she was residing in her previous foster home<sup>8</sup>. Child 2 further added that her previous foster parents and other foster children in the foster home were mean to her and she told Mr. Vazquez about this; however, she is unable to recall when she told him (Mr. Vazquez).

### Testimony of CHS Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez

Mr. Vazquez stated that on Friday, January 22, 2010, he facilitated face-to-face visitation of Child 2 with her (Child 2's) siblings, transporting Child 2 from her foster home to a neutral meeting place. Mr. Vazquez further stated that during the visit, Child 2 disclosed to him (Mr. Vazquez) that another child in the foster home (name unknown) was allegedly being physically abused by adult household members (names unknown). Mr. Vazquez asserted that he asked Child 2 if anyone was hurting her (Child 2) and Child 2 replied, "No." He further asserted that he observed no marks or bruises on

<sup>7</sup> The Florida Abuse Hotline serves as the central intake and referral point for all reports of suspected abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or exploitation of children, disabled adults, and the elderly.

<sup>8</sup> Child 2's previous foster home is the institutional home referenced in FSFN Intake #2010-013085.



Child 2. According to Mr. Vazquez, upon taking Child 2 back to her foster home, he (Mr. Vazquez) addressed the abuse allegations with the foster parents, who denied the allegations. Mr. Vazquez admitted that he did not immediately report the abuse allegations to the Hotline, based on his belief that Child 2 was being questioned and the foster parents' denial of the allegations. Mr. Vazquez added that another reason he failed to report the allegation to the Hotline on January 22, 2010, was because his supervisor was on leave that day.<sup>9</sup> However, Mr. Vazquez confirmed that despite his supervisor's absence, he was fully aware of the requirement (§§ 92.20(2)(a) F.S.) that he report any allegations of abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or exploitation to the Hotline immediately.

Mr. Vazquez stated that although he failed to immediately report Child 2's disclosure to the Hotline on January 22, 2010, on January 24, 2010, he reported to the Hotline the allegations of "physical injury" and "mental injury," perpetrated by household members (names unknown) of the foster home against Child 2 and another child (name unknown), stating, "It was the right thing to do." Mr. Vazquez asserted that he anonymously reported the allegations to the Hotline and gave only his first name.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Vazquez admitted that he failed to identify himself as Child 2's dependency case manager because he did not want to put [himself] on the line," since he did not believe Child 2 was being truthful.

#### Incident Report concerning FSFN Intake #2010-013685

Pursuant to UFF policy, Mr. Vazquez completed<sup>11</sup> a CHS Incident Report regarding the alleged abuse disclosed to him by Child 2. Therein, Mr. Vazquez documented the following, in pertinent part:

- Person reporting the incident: [redacted] Jorge Vazquez
- Date and time reporter became aware of the incident: [redacted] January 22, 2010, at 11:00 p.m.

"A new abuse report #2010-013685-01 was called on 01/24/2010 at 9:00<sup>12</sup> PM (institutional) was received on a open services case.... struck.... with a belt... slapped in the face... been scratched. It is unknown if the child has any visible injuries at this time."

<sup>9</sup> According to Ms. Murphy, Ms. Krauch was on leave January 22, 2010; the same date that Child 2 disclosed the alleged abuse to Mr. Vazquez.

<sup>10</sup> In contradiction of Mr. Vazquez, the Hotline recording reflects that Mr. Vazquez provided his first and last name and identified himself as the neighbor of Child 2.

<sup>11</sup> The date Mr. Vazquez submitted the report appears to be January 26, 2010, and the final supervisor approval signature on the report is dated January 27, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> As previously noted, the call was made to the Hotline at 9:02 p.m..

**OIG Review of the Hotline Call Regarding Institutional Intake #2010-013085<sup>13</sup>**  
 Review by the OIG of the recording of the call placed to Hotline revealed the following, in pertinent part:

- At the onset of the call, the reporter stated, "I have a concern.... I think [Child 2] is being... abused."
- The reporter identified himself as "George Vazquez," but did not identify himself as the dependency case manager of Child 2.
- The reporter stated that Child 2 is a "neighbor"<sup>14</sup> of the reporter.<sup>15</sup>
- The reporter advised that Child 2 disclosed the allegations to him/her during a conversation on "Friday."<sup>16</sup>
- The reporter noted that Child 2 has disclosed the allegations to him/her twice.<sup>17</sup>

### **OIG Review of FSFN Records Concerning Child 2**

The OIG reviewed relevant FSFN records, which revealed the part:

#### **Chronological Notes Report (Case ID #84287<sup>18</sup>)**

- Note ID #11348444, which reflects a "Visitation Sitting" visit at a recreational park in Vero Beach, Florida, was recorded as being conducted by Mr. Vazquez on January 22, 2010, beginning at 1:00 p.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m. The aforementioned document reflects that Mr. Vazquez created the record at 7:25 p.m. on January 22, 2010.

There is no documentation by Mr. Vazquez reflecting that Child 2 disclosed alleged abuse during the January 22, 2010 visitation.

Note ID #113510742 reflects a "Telephone Contact" by Ms. Wells with Mr. Vazquez at 12:45 p.m. on January 25, 2010, wherein Ms. Wells noted that Mr. Vazquez advised, "[Child

<sup>13</sup> FSFN Institutional Intake #2010-013085 was initiated at 9:02 p.m. on January 24, 2010, based on allegations of physical and mental injury concerning Child 2 perpetrated by his foster parents, and was assigned to Ms. Wells. The investigation was closed on March 22, 2010, with the verified findings.

<sup>14</sup> A query of [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) revealed that Mr. Vazquez's residence is located 49.49 miles from where Child 2 resided at the time of the call to the Hotline.

<sup>15</sup> Although Mr. Vazquez provided his full name, he did not identify himself as the case manager of Child 2.

<sup>16</sup> As previously noted, it has been determined that Friday was January 22, 2010, and the call to the Hotline was made on January 24, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> The reporter did not elaborate.

<sup>18</sup> Case ID #84287 was created subsequent to closure of a child protective investigation concerning Child 2. Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez was assigned to provide case management services, which are currently ongoing.



2] recently spoke about the foster mother hitting, slapping, choking and dragging the other child, but not [REDACTED]."

### Employee Time Records

A review of CHS Salary Timesheets for Mr. Vazquez for January 2010 revealed that Mr. Vazquez recorded hours worked during the dates documented in FSN.

### Employee Travel Voucher Records

A review of employee travel records of Mr. Vazquez for the month of January 2010 revealed that Mr. Vazquez failed to document travel for home visits reflected in FSN.

Specific dates and addresses are not reflected on the mileage record.

Ms. Murphy stated that the average case load of a CHS de 13 cases involving 23 children.

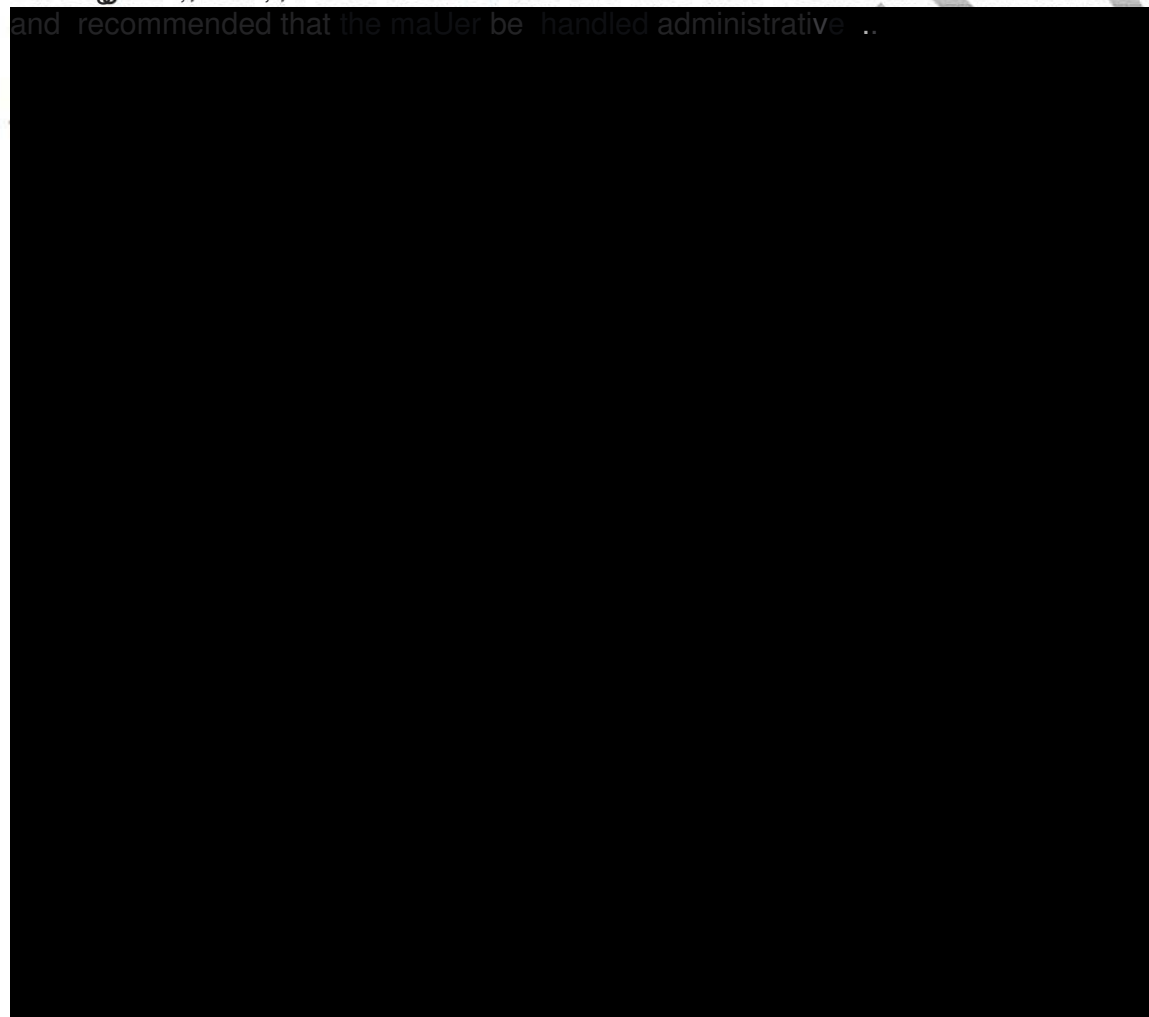
## INSPECTOR GENERAL'S COMMENTS

Based on testimony obtained and records reviewed, the Allegation that Children's Home Society Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez falsified a foster care document in reference to FSN Intake #2008428443 is **supported**. The Teen Normalcy Plan dated November 11, 2009, contains the signatures of the Foster Mother, Child 1 and the Dependency case manager; all of which appear to be exact photocopy replicas of the original signatures on the Teen Normalcy Plan dated February 24, 2009. Additionally, the three signatures are not written in ink but correspond to dates that are written in ink. Furthermore, the document reflects two "Acknowledgement" sections, although the actual form only contains one. Although it could not be confirmed that a face-to-face visit with Child 1 and the Foster Mother was in fact falsified, it was determined that Mr. Vazquez altered the Teen Normalcy Plan dated November 11, 2009.

The Additional Allegation that Children's Home Society Dependency Case Manager Jorge Vazquez failed to report suspected child abuse to the Florida Abuse Hotline within the statutorily mandated time frame is **supported**. Mr. Vazquez conducted a face-to-face visit with Child 2 on January 22, 2010. By his own admission, Mr. Vazquez confirmed that Child 2 disclosed the alleged abuse to him during that visit and he failed to report these allegations to the Hotline until January 24, 2010, despite the statutory requirement (§39.201(2)(a), F.S.) that he do so "immediately." This was further verified through a review of FSN records and the recording of the call to the Hotline. Notably, Mr. Vazquez did not identify himself to the Hotline as the case manager for Child 2; rather he informed the Hotline that Child 2 was his "neighbor."

It is recommended that the Central Regional Director review the findings of this investigation; provide a copy of this Investigative Report to the management of United for Families, Inc. and Children's Home Society of Florida; and request that a copy be placed in the personnel record of Mr. Vazquez.

In accordance with §20065(b)(3) F.S., on June 3, 2010, this investigation was coordinated with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Public Assistance Fraud Unit, for consideration of investigation of possible criminal violation of §839.13(2)(a) and (c), F.S. (Falsifying Records), §§832.22(1)(a) and (3), F.S. (Official Misconduct), and §§9201(1)(a) and (b) 5(2)(a), F.S. (Failure to Report Child Abuse). On August 4, 2010 FDLE advised that this case was declined for criminal investigation and recommended that the matter be handled administrative ..



**This investigation has been conducted in accordance with the ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL Principles of Quality Standards for Investigations.**